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DIPLOMACY BY SATELLITE

Foreign Office link with embassies

By Our Foreign Correspondent

Plans to link British embassies to the Foreign Office in London by a communications satellite are expected to be disclosed next week.

The Government Communications Headquarters, Cheltenham, which handles most of the security communications systems for the Government, are examining a site at Bude, Cornwall, as the place to build a £50,000 dish antenna for handling satellite messages.

This site is in the grounds of the old Cleeve Army camp, some way from the satellite tracking station operated by the G.P.O. at Goonhilly. Communications specialists from Cheltenham have visited Goonhilly to study the methods used there for handling intelligence traffic. This will be the type of messages coming by way of the Earth station.

The satellite link of radio link would provide a more secure way of sending information. With the new but highly complex methods of transmission, such as polar code modulation and spectrum spread messages can be sent in codes that are almost impossible to crack.

Satellites are vulnerable to jamming. If all the operating characteristics of a satellite are known bogus messages could be sent in a noisy stream to overload the circuit.

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